

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the present application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claims 1 to 137. (Canceled).

138. (New) A method of fabricating a stent comprising the steps of:

- a) cutting a stent pattern into a flat sheet, said pattern having a first long side and a second long side, said first long side being provided with a plurality of pairs of engagement points, said second long side being provided with a plurality of pairs of engagement points;
- b) deforming said pattern into a tubular shape so that said plurality of pairs of first long side engagement points and said plurality of pair of second long side engagement points are disposed substantially opposite each other and so that a v-shaped notch is formed between the first long side and the second long side between respective pairs of engagement points; and
- c) welding said plurality of pairs of first long side engagement points and said plurality of pair of second long side engagement points to one another at said v-shaped notch to form said stent such that a weld is created at a location of said v-shaped notch.

139. (New) The method of claim 138, wherein welding comprises drawing material from the surfaces defining said engagement points to create said weld.
140. (New) The method of claim 139, wherein each of said plurality of pairs of first long side engagement points is provided with a bridge disposed therebetween, the method further comprising:
 - a) cutting said bridge; and
 - b) drawing additional weld material into said v-shaped notch from said bridge on both sides of said each of said plurality of pairs of first long side engagement points.
141. (New) The method of claim 139, wherein welding further comprises providing an area of weld material on interior walls of the stent.
142. (New) The method of claim 141, wherein providing the area of weld material comprises providing the area of weld material below the location of said v-shaped notch.
143. (New) The method of claim 138, wherein deforming comprises deforming said pattern into said tubular shape about a mandrel.
144. (New) The method of claim 143, wherein deforming said pattern into said tubular shape about said mandrel comprises leaving a gap between said tubular shape and the mandrel at the location of said v-shaped notch.

145. (New) The method of claim 144, wherein welding comprises providing weld material to said gap for forming said weld.
146. (New) The method of claim 138, further comprising providing said flat sheet with a plurality of alignment apertures.
147. (New) The method of claim 140, wherein cutting said bridge comprises using a laser to cut said bridge.
148. (New) The method of claim 138, wherein welding comprises utilizing a welding run that is offset from, the point where said respective pairs of engagement points contact each other.
149. (New) The method of claim 148, wherein utilizing comprises utilizing a welding run that is offset about 0.01 mm from the point where said respective pairs of engagement points contact each other.
150. (New) The method of claim 138, wherein welding comprises spot welding.
151. (New) The method of claim 150, wherein spot welding comprises forming a plurality of spot welds.
152. (New) The method of claim 151, wherein forming comprises forming five spot welds.

153. (New) The method of claim 140, wherein welding comprises running said weld from outside to inside.
154. (New) The method of claim 139, wherein welding further comprises drawing additional weld material into the location of said v-shaped notch from said bridge on both sides of said engagement points on said first long side.
155. (New) A stent made according to the method claim 145, the stent comprising a first long side and a second long side, said first long side being provided with a plurality of pairs of engagement points, said second long side provided with a plurality of pairs of engagement points, said plurality of pairs of first long side engagement points and said plurality of pairs of second long side engagement points disposed substantially opposite each other so as to define a v-shaped notch therebetween in an unwelded state of the stent, and connected to each other via a weld disposed at a location of said v-shaped notch.
156. (New) The stent of claim 155, said stent defining a longitudinal lumen wherein substantially no portion of said stent projects into said longitudinal lumen upon expansion of said stent against the internal wall of a vessel.
157. (New) The stent of claim 155, wherein said weld is wider than other portions of said stent.